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Since I arrived late this season, our field director, Mr. Richard C. Haines, was kind enough to write the first letter which was sent out jointly to both members and friends of the Oriental Institute and the American Schools. It is only fair, therefore, that I should not only acknowledge but repay this debt to Carl Haines in kind. V. E. C.

Although it took me a week including stopovers and travel time to reach Baghdad via Oslo, Copenhagen, and Geneva, even more time was required before I could complete the final 120 miles from Baghdad to Afak. Arriving in Iraq on December 1 it was not until the afternoon of December 9 that I actually set foot in the expedition house. Any day I could have made the journey from Baghdad to Diwaniyeh, Afak's nearest rail point, but the final 20 miles of unimproved clay road from Diwaniyeh was either a long walk or a tiresome donkey ride until it had dried. The fact that the winter rains have been both early and heavy was, of course, the deciding factor. Prior to my arrival no motor vehicle had made the trip from Diwaniyeh to Afak for more than a week. For some days there was no mail delivery and then it finally came by foot. Exhausted kerosene supplies had to be replenished from Diwaniyeh via donkey train and doled out by the local government to insure equitable distribution at fair prices.

My waiting time in Baghdad, however, was not entirely idle. My first duty as well as pleasure was to pay my respects to the various officials in the Department of Antiquities headed by H. E. Dr. Najj al-Asil. Then there was the matter of securing my residence permit from the police and of registering all members of our staff with the U. S. Consulate. A third and more acute problem concerned expedition supplies stemming from Chicago which had been tied up in customs in Baghdad for six weeks. Some of the items in the two big boxes were needed badly in Afak and it was most important to get the inspection finished and the duty paid. This was done and the boxes were loaded on the freight train for Diwaniyeh.

The delay also enabled me to make a very brief visit to the Oriental Institute team based in the rehabilitated former Khafajeh expedition house on the Diyala. There I found the Jacobsens, the Adamses, and Shirley Lyon comfortably situated and busily engaged. The survey maps which should eventually tie in with the work which Bob and I did last winter were of particular interest to me. Unfortunately lack of time did not permit me to observe the excavation program being carried out at a Sassanian-Islamic dam and sluice gates on the old Nahrawan Canal or at the large site of the same age some 3-4 kilometers south of the dam, because these locations lie quite some distance from Khafajeh itself. Nevertheless it was good to see friends and colleagues once more and to be informed concerning their activities.

Time also permitted me to pay a call on Professor Lenzen at the Deutsches Archaeologisches Institut. Not only did I have the privilege to meet the staff of the present Warka Expedition but to hear a detailed explanation of last season's work at Uruk and of the short season at Babylon this autumn where the Greek theatre was the object of investigation. The heavy rains were holding the Germans in Baghdad also. Their transport problem from Samawah to Warka is considerably more difficult than ours from Diwaniyeh to Afak.

Furthermore, I was happy to make the acquaintance of Dr. T. D. Stewart, a physical anthropologist from the Smithsonian in Washington. He is here for a period of three months making a detailed study of the remains of Neanderthal man found by the Soleckis at Shanidar cave near the Turkish border in northern Iraq. The skull which Dr. Stewart has been able to reconstruct almost puts ridges in one's brow just to observe it! While we here at Nippur think we have something quite old at 5,000 years, the Shanidar skull is approximately ten times that age! This fact only serves to emphasize how long is the span of human habitation in the Near East.

After one full day of drying sun with the promise of another to follow, Carl Haines finally reached me by telephone on the evening of December 7 saying that Jabbar, our driver, thought he could make it to Diwaniyeh the next evening at 11:15 to meet me. The following morning I was quick to secure a reservation for the night train. At 6:00 P.M. I climbed aboard with my personal luggage, groceries, books, and various other items for the expedition. This, my first trip by train from Baghdad to Diwaniyeh, was by far the smoothest ride I have ever had between those two points. Quite a reception committee awaited me. Yes, Jabbar was there accompanied by Said Wa'il, our commissioner, Mahmoud, our cook, and significantly by a local Afak bus driver. During the afternoon the first three had attempted to come to Diwaniyeh from Afak. About five miles short of their goal while trying to skirt a long deep mudhole, the Jeep mired all the way down to the frame. All they could do was to abandon it and walk. The bus driver, however, with his old battered high-wheeled English Ford had successfully negotiated the whole distance. Next morning we went with him by bus to the place where the jeep was mired, and had little difficulty in pulling it out and getting the engine started.

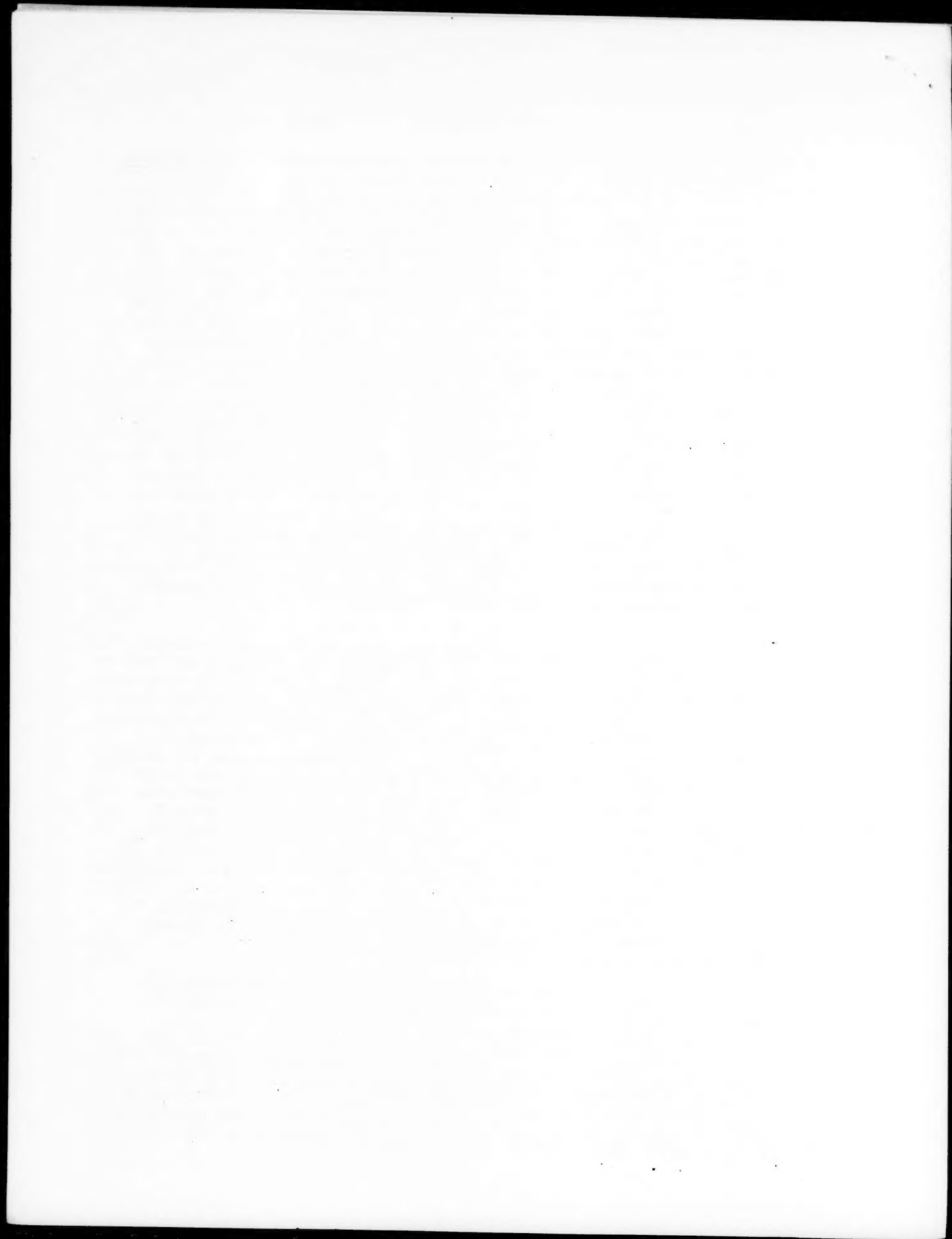
We were given a hearty welcome at our house by Carl, Don, Jim, Abdullah Sultan, Salih, and Anoun. A couple of hours later the two boxes were delivered to our courtyard. In the evening we could listen to Beethoven's Emperor Concerto and other favorites, because our records had arrived along with the other supplies.

The next morning I made my first trip to the mound to see the remains of the large Parthian temple. That this was the function of the building now seems reasonably assured. After greeting old friends among the Sharqatis and local workmen, I had hoped to take some photographs. By that time, however, the sand was blowing so badly that to try to take a good Kodachrome was impossible. They had to wait until another day. Where else in the world can one be stuck in a mud hole while a sand storm rages!

Perhaps a brief review of the work of the 1955-56 season (cf. Illustrated London News, August 18, 1956) will serve as an aid toward understanding what is actually going on now, because what we are doing is only a continuation of that year's work. You may recall that the main object of our investigation two years ago was the temple of Inanna built by Shulgi (ca. 2,000 B.C.) named Eduranki, "house of the bond of heaven and earth." This identification was established not only by inscribed stone door sockets but by inscribed bricks capping a series of five foundation deposits recovered there. We unearthed a temple a little more than 60 meters in width and were able to fix its length as about 103 meters from north to south. The northern wall had been rebuilt in many periods and only it had escaped the general razing in Parthian times which had left only stubs of the Ur III walls. These stubs, however, were sufficient to enable us to recover almost the complete plan of the northern 2/5 of Eduranki. The Parthians laid down a large platform whose libn facing reached almost to the inside face of the northern wall of the earlier series of temples. Inside the libn edging of the platform they packed a fill of debris from surrounding areas some 2-3 meters thick. Upon this platform they erected their own building only slightly smaller in dimensions than the Ur III temple. The northern portion of the Parthian structure was somewhat denuded and it was only near the close of our campaign that we began to get a plan (not at all intelligible then) of the building, whose walls were preserved as much as four meters in height.

This season, in order to reach the continuation of Shulgi's temple, our first task was to excavate and now to remove the remains of the Parthian structure before tackling the fill beneath it and ultimately once more the Ur III temple itself. The Parthian temple, as we now believe we are justified in calling it, is quite rewarding in itself. In dimension, as I have already broadly indicated, it is about 60 meters east to west and a little less than 100 meters north to south. The outside walls are nicely niched and the walls throughout range from 2-3 meters in thickness. They are made of the characteristic big Parthian libn (sun dried brick) with generous amounts of mud mortar between them. The walls must have been a continual problem, because due to salt action the bottoms of the walls were constantly disintegrating. This shows very clearly when the walls are exposed. In one of the main rooms, for example, there are six floors in roughly two meters of space. Just above each floor the breaking up of the walls is plainly visible. Examination of the walls shows that the temple was rebuilt twice and repaired often.

While the northern facade with the main doorway was destroyed long ago, our excavation clearly indicates the presence of such an entrance. The only other exterior door is preserved on the east. Originally the eastern facade was niched in the manner of ancient temple construction here, but in one of its rebuildings much of the exterior face is made with semi-engaged libn columns. In a reconstructed plan when entering through either door, one is introduced to an elaborate system of not less than six courtyards and approximately fifty rooms. The core of the temple consisting of two





cellae and two antecellae can be reached only by a very bent axis approach. One very interesting feature is a long L-shaped corridor which permits a back entrance to the heart of the temple from one of the, or rather the, northwestern most courtyard. Next to the outside walls is a great series of small rooms perhaps devoted to storage or other purposes. In the main cella there is considerable ash for which, due to its peculiar character, we do not have a satisfactory explanation. Beneath the ash two low plastered podia have begun to appear and in opposite corners of the room, although not at the same levels, two slabs of stone (which may have moved upward as the floor levels rose) in each served some unknown function. At one phase in its use a small animal, possibly a lamb, was buried beneath the door sill of the main antecella with three inverted bowls one upon the other beside it. Almost in the same spot, although at another floor level, the skeleton of a bird or fowl was found beneath a bowl. On the floor in this antecella just before the door to the cella were three bricks stamped with what resembles the Greek letter psi. While it must be admitted at once that the floor in this room is made of an assortment of reused bricks from all periods, we do not recall bricks with the psi-like stamp in our previous experience here.

Our objects are few consisting for the most part of pottery plus terra cotta human and animal figurines. The handle of a nice bronze ladle, approximately 10 1/2 inches in length, terminates in the head of an ibex or gazelle. A rattle in the form of a female bust made of terra cotta is so exaggerated in facial features, at least, that it suggests a caricature. A complete bone figurine of a nude Parthian goddess about 5 1/2 inches high and an incised Early Dynastic figure showing a dancing man came from fill. The small dancing figure perhaps served as a knife or dagger inlay.

The tablets recovered so far are also the product of fill. Of the approximately 50 pieces, few complete, all except three or four are of the Ur III period. The ones with dates belong almost without exception to the reign of Shulgi. At the moment we are in the process of negotiating for a location in which to build an oven for baking these, and we hope other tablets, before cleaning, repair, and study.

Nor should I neglect to mention the fact that while the remains of the Parthian temple are being torn down with big picks, our best pickmen are more profitably employed trying to clear up some of the problems which have long surrounded the wall of the Ekur around the ziggurat. It is still too early, however, to indicate any results from these labors.

The season is off to a good start in spite of the rains. Our spirits are high and we look forward to the coming weeks with anticipation.

Oh yes, just one sour note! The old blue Jeep must be sent to Nejef not for a quiet burial as it may rightly deserve but rather for considerable repairs. It seems that it always takes two cars to keep one running most of the time!

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Afak!

Vaughn E. Crawford, Director  
Baghdad School